

NATIONAL SECURITY

Now that the Cold War has ended, the United States faces a variety of threats to our national security. Congress has debated how best to defend ourselves and our allies against terrorists who use chemical or biological weapons, foreign governments who launch a missile attack, and other antagonists in the Middle East and Southeast Europe. Congress also expressed concern over the readiness of our military equipment and personnel, the sufficiency of retirement benefits, and the equity of pay scales. But spending to meet all of our defense needs is limited by the nation's overall economic policy of a balanced budget. In this seminar, you'll simulate the debate that will occur in the next Congress over questions of affordability and priorities in defense spending.

Questions To Consider

- What do you think are the most significant threats to the United States? How well do you think we are able to meet these threats today?
- What kinds of threats are the most immediate? What threats could evolve over the next ten years? What threats could go away?
- Which nations are now most threatening to our security? Ten years from now?
- In which environments does our nation face its greatest threats:
 - space, air, land, sea, subsurface
 - arctic, jungle, desert, city
 - distant or close
- Will technology alone enable us to meet threats or are other factors important? Can arms control and international agreements be an effective way to control threats?
- What role will alliances and international organizations play in meeting threats to international peace? How much should we depend on allies to meet various threats?

Introduction

In the wake of the Cold War, the United States faces a wide variety of threats to its national security. Our ability to respond to those threats is limited by the financial and human resources that the nation agrees to commit to our national defense, and by our judgment as to which threats are the most in need of attention. The lack of a single enemy, such as the Soviet Union, has complicated the national debate over military priorities. Military and private organizations, interest groups, corporations, and communities emphasize their own priorities in allocating resources to meet defense needs. Their efforts to persuade the Congress often affect how legislators vote to allocate funds. As a result, some military programs receive more funding – and some less – than might be necessary from a truly national perspective of our military needs and priorities.

The list of national security threats that characterizes the national debate has grown extensively in recent years. Many remain concerned that Russia's nuclear arsenal poses the greatest threat. Others believe that acts of terrorism, either by individuals or by "rogue" governments, are a greater danger. Proliferation of nuclear technology and materials, chemical and biological weapons, and their means of delivery pose a major challenge to peace. A Presidential Commission recently reported that the nation's critical infrastructures supporting energy, communications, transportation, and utilities is quite vulnerable to disruption by military or covert means. Military requirements to defend against intercontinental ballistic and theater missiles, to control space and prevent enemies from using it, to control the oceans and battlefield airspace, to conduct special operations in difficult places and circumstances, and to maintain readiness and operability of equipment and training of troops will always make major claims upon scarce defense resources.

Clearly, there is no simple solution that will fully satisfy all of these defense needs. The budget will not permit unlimited spending to meet defense needs. The nation has other domestic needs that must also be met with our limited resources. The democratic process ultimately determines how the nation votes to spend its resources between military and non-military priorities. Moreover, the democratic process has much to do with how spending for military programs is allocated – regardless of the actual priority of military needs.

THE DEFENSE BUDGET GAME

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to provide students with an understanding of the dynamics of the defense budget process. During the preliminary phase of the game, students will identify and discuss various military threats to the nation and to our national interests and will develop a consensus on which are the most important and immediate threats. Having established this essential framework, students will assume the roles of different officials in the Department of Defense who attempt to influence the size and composition of the defense budget.

Background

The defense budget can be considered in a variety of illuminating ways. Most of all, the defense budget should provide the resources to meet the threats to the United States. Budgetary constraints, however, require that funds be allocated for the most important threats and functions needed to support an effective military force. Lower military priorities should be reflected by lower funding levels in order to keep within overall budgetary constraints. Failure to remain within budgetary constraints results in deficit spending for the nation which can have a significant impact on the nation's economy.

The budget can be categorized according to function and military service. A functional breakdown of the defense budget would include:

1. Military Personnel
2. Retired Pay
3. Operations and Maintenance
4. Research Development Testing and Evaluation
5. Procurement
6. Military Construction
7. Family Housing
8. Nuclear weapons – Department of Energy

A service breakdown of the budget would reflect the amounts of funding allocated to each military service, to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and to the Department of Energy which manages the nation's stockpile of nuclear weapons:

1. Army
2. Navy
3. Air Force
4. Marine Corps
5. Office of the Secretary of Defense
6. Department of Energy

Each of the military services and the Department of Energy have particular missions to perform and contributions to make in implementing United States military national security strategy. The Navy, for example, is responsible for projecting military power overseas, particularly to regions where the United States has no permanent military facilities under its jurisdiction. Aircraft carrier battle groups are regularly deployed overseas to provide an American military presence to ensure military balance and stability in regions that could threaten our interests. Ballistic missile submarines are regularly deployed to ensure that we have nuclear weapons on alert that could survive any attack and could respond with a devastating nuclear strike — a key element to our strategy of “deterrence”. Navy submarines are also equipped with conventionally armed long range cruise missiles that can strike targets with pinpoint accuracy. Such missiles were used against terrorist facilities in recent years.

A similar discussion of military assets, contributions, and problems of each of the other military services and the Department of Energy will be provided as additional background information needed to play the simulation game.

The Players

Students will be asked to volunteer for the following roles in the simulation game:

- Secretary of Defense
- Secretary of Energy
- Secretary of the Navy
- Secretary of the Army
- Secretary of the Air Force
- Secretary of the Marine Corps

Other students will act as advisors to these officials to help the military secretaries formulate their organizations' respective recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary of Energy will also have volunteer advisors.

The Game: Background and Procedures

The Defense Budget for FY 2002 could be about \$300 billion dollars. The Joint Chiefs of Staff of each of the military services believe that this amount is insufficient to meet current and future military requirements and have requested an additional \$10 billion be added to that amount.

The \$300 billion dollar request is divided up in the following proportions:

Army	25 percent
Navy	27 percent
Marine Corps	3 percent
Air Force	29 percent
Sec Defense	14 percent
Dept of Energy	2 percent

The \$10 billion that the Joint Chiefs has identified has not been categorized according to service and is “up for grabs”. However, because of unexpected increases in the price of energy and oil, the budget surplus that experts had predicted for 2002 will not occur. Any additional defense spending above \$300 billion will either increase the nation’s financial deficit or will have to be accommodated by reducing the size of the tax cut planned by President Bush.

Each Service Secretary, and the Secretaries of Defense and Energy will assemble their team in a section of the classroom and discuss the following:

1. Does the discussion of threat to the U.S. suggest that their organization’s role in national security should be expanded or reduced?
2. Do the assets and missions of their organization make particular contributions that aren’t being adequately recognized and should receive more funding? Are there problems that particular services are experiencing that require special attention and additional funding?
3. Is the proportion (percentage) of funding allocated to their organization satisfactory or unsatisfactory? Should it be increased or decreased? If increased, which service’s budget should be decreased to accommodate the change, or should the change be absorbed by approving the Chief’s recommendation to add \$10 billion — at the cost of the deficit or tax reduction?

After the teams have discussed those issues, the Secretary of each military service will make a short speech outlining any recommendations he or she would make to the Secretary of Defense about whether, how, and why the defense budget should be changed — i.e. the service share should be increased or decreased by what percentage points and why. The Secretary of Defense will consult with his or her advisors and make a decision about whether and how to change the proportions and/or the level of funding and announce the decision to the class.

After the Secretary of Defense has announced his decision, the Secretary of Energy will consult with his or her advisors and announce his decision regarding funding for nuclear weapons.

Time permitting, the class will review the process of the game and compare the outcome with their initial thoughts about how the defense budget meets (or doesn’t meet) the most important threats to the United States.